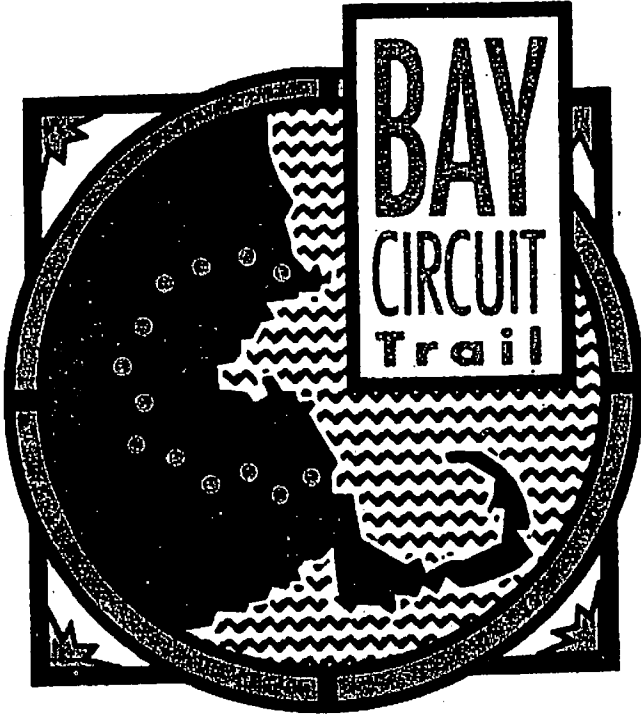
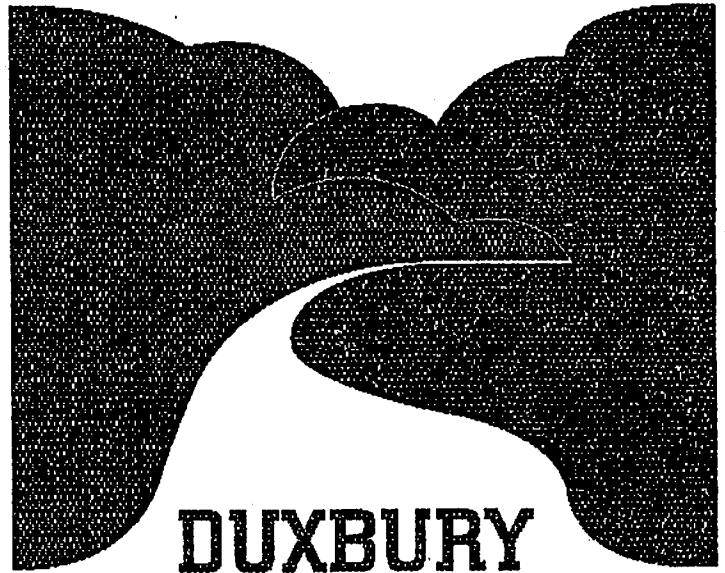


DUXBURY HISTORY FILE
REFERENCE



BAY CIRCUIT TRAIL



Get out while you can

Before winter blows in, discover Boston's other emerald necklace

By THOMAS A. LEPISTO

Feel like warming your face in the gentle glow of autumn sunshine? Head for the Bay Circuit Trail, where you can stroll through kaleidoscopic woods without traveling any farther than Boston's suburbs.

The Bay Circuit is a developing greenway that planners hope will eventually arc 200 miles from Newburyport through Framingham to Duxbury. This vast corridor of open space connects conservation lands that are at their most beautiful on crisp fall days.

Primarily the work of a private nonprofit group, the Bay Circuit Trail is a walking route with some options for bicycling. On it, you can find an easy trailhead if you're looking for a short outing with children, an athletic trek across an entire town, or a guided walk steeped in local lore.

From Newbury salt marshes to Duxbury cranberry bogs, the Bay Circuit

traverses a variety of landscapes. It is also a trail through time that goes by historic village centers and crosses 350-year-old cart paths. In my own explorations, each trip has revealed the unexpected in places I thought I knew.

Although the Bay Circuit Trail is still a work in progress, scheduled for completion in 2000, about 140 miles of it is available for public use now. What follows is a

sampling of the delights you can find along this sprouting greenway today, arranged from north to south.

Most trail sections mentioned here are marked with 2-inch by 6-inch white blazes on trees or telephone poles. Four-inch square signs bearing the Bay Circuit Trail logo indicate where the trail meets a road. See story on Page 13 for specific directions and referrals for more information.

Where to find the trails

The Bay Circuit Alliance, the nonprofit force behind the trail, offers route information and referrals for more specific maps and directions. The alliance is at 3 Railroad St., Andover 01810. Phone: 978-470-1982 or Liz Tentarelli at 978-470-2520. E-mail: baycircuit@juno.com. www.serve.com/baycircuit.

The alliance office is in Moor and Mountain (978-475-3665), an outdoor gear store within sight of the Andover commuter rail stop. The store stocks guidebooks that cover the trail from Prospect Hill in Rowley to the Andover-Tewksbury town line: "The Bay Circuit Guide to Walks in and Around Ipswich," "The Bay Circuit Guide to Walks in and around Boxford," "The Bay Circuit and AVIS Guide to Walks in Andover." Next year, the alliance plans to issue the first in a series of 14 guides that eventually will cover the entire route.

Below are directions to some of the trail access points:

Newburyport The Joppa Flats trailhead is at a large parking area on the north side of the Plum Island Turnpike, just west of the Plum Island Airport. Across the road, at a trail sign near the end of the airport, a map and directions for the route through Newbury are usually available. The directions are also on the Web at: ww1.shore.net/dwstr/bct/bctnewbury.html or call Dan Streeter at 978-462-4605.

Rowley: Prospect Hill trailhead Head 0.6 mile east on Route 133 from its junction with Route 1A in Rowley just north of the Ipswich town line, or 4.1 miles west on 133 from I-95 exit 54A. Watch for a sign and small parking area on the south side of the highway. The Bay Circuit Trail heads left (not straight up the hill) as you start walking south.

Ipswich: Willowdale State Forest Hike into the wood on the dirt road (Pineswamp Road) next to the Doyon School, which is on Linebrook Road. The Bay Circuit Trail turns right, leaving the Pineswamp Road in half a mile. There is also trail access and parking where the

trail crosses Linebrook Road again in Willowdale State Forest, west of Route 1.

Boxford Village Historic District From I-95 exit 52, take Topsfield Road west into Boxford. In a little over 2 miles, you are on the Bay Circuit route when you take a right on Elm Street. The Community Center, site of Sunday's Boxford Trails Association fest, is on the left near the next big intersection at Middleton Road.

Andover From the Andover commuter rail stop, it is a 10-minute walk south to the Bay Circuit Trail. Cross the tracks on Essex Street, turn right on School Street, and continue down Lupine Road. Watch carefully for a trail blaze on the left at the Purdon Reservation.

Deer Jump Reservation, site of an attractive section of riverside trail shared by the Bay Circuit, Penacook, and Merrimack River trails, is on Launching Road, on the north side of River Road just under a mile west of I-93 exit 45.

Concord Parking for Walden Pond State Reservation is on Route 126 just south of its intersection with Route 2 in Concord.

Lincoln From the South Lincoln commuter rail stop, take a walking path that parallels the tracks outbound 0.4 mile to a trail junction where there is a bridge over the tracks on the left. Crossing the bridge puts you on the Bay Circuit Trail toward Wayland. Turning right is the route toward Walden Pond.

Wayland Parking for the Cow Common Conservation Area (watch carefully — easy to miss) is on the left side of Old Sudbury Road (Route 27) as you're heading north 0.6 mile from the Route 126 intersection in Wayland Center. Maps and directions for Wayland are available from the Town Conservation Office in the town office building at 41 Cochituate Road. 508-358-3669.

Sudbury There is ample parking at the Nobscot Scout Reservation on the west side of Nobscot Road, 1.2 miles south of Route 20 at the Framingham town line (the street becomes Edgell Road in Framingham). Trail maps are posted at a trailhead kiosk near the parking area, or ask at the nearby ranger's house. 508-443-5161.

Framingham/Marlborough A good access point for the Bay Circuit Trail in Callahan State Park is on Broadmeadow Road in Marlborough (near the Framingham town line). From Route 20 in Marlborough, head south on Farm Road, turn left onto Broadmeadow Road just after the Marlborough airport, and continue straight ahead where Broadmeadow Road turns to dirt. A parking lot is on the left in about half a mile. To reach the Bay Circuit, hike farther up the road and turn right onto the Bear Paw Trail, which intersects the Bay Circuit in one-half mile. Turn left to follow the route toward the Nobscot Reservation.

Trail maps of Callahan State Park are available from Cochituate State Park in Wayland. 508-653-9641.

Ashland At the Ashland Town Forest, up to four cars can park where the Bay Circuit Trail meets Winter Street. Information about the trail is available on the Ashland Town Forest home page: www.tiac.net/users/tiger/

Sherborn From the Pine Hill School, on the south side of Eliot Street (Route 16) where it intersects Route 27, the trail heads south through the town forest, emerges for a short walk on Goulding Street, and enters the Rocky Narrows Reservation at its parking area on Forest Street. The hike from the school to the Charles River in Rocky Narrows is about 5 miles.

Medfield To reach the Noon Hill Reservation from Route 109, head a tenth of a mile west from the junction with Route 27, turn left on Causeway Street and go 1.3 miles; then left onto Noque Hill Street for 0.2 mile to a small parking area on the

right. A route description and maps are available from local volunteer Chris Haley at 617-954-5616 (daytime).

Walpole To hike the Bay Circuit through the Walpole Town Forest, park at the high school on Common Street a third of a mile south of South Street. (From the commuter rail stop in Walpole Center, it is a 3/4-mile walk along historic Common Street to the school). Directions and maps are on the Web at www.walpole.ma.us/sbaydes.htm

Sharon From the intersection of Routes 1 and 27 in Walpole, take 27 east into Sharon and turn right onto Moose Hill Street in 0.2 mile. Moose Hill Audubon Sanctuary is 1.5 miles ahead, with parking on the left. For information, call the sanctuary at 781-784-5691.

Duxbury There's a small parking space at the northwestern end of the Bay Circuit in Duxbury on the south side of Valley Street 0.4 mile west of Summer Street (Route 53). Bay Farm has a larger parking area on Bay Road; to get there take exit 10 off Route 3, follow Tremont Street east for half a mile, then turn right onto Park Street and go another half-mile. For a map of the Duxbury section of the trail, go to Town Hall, 878 Tremont St.; 781-934-1131. On the Web: www.duxbury.ma.us/baycircuit

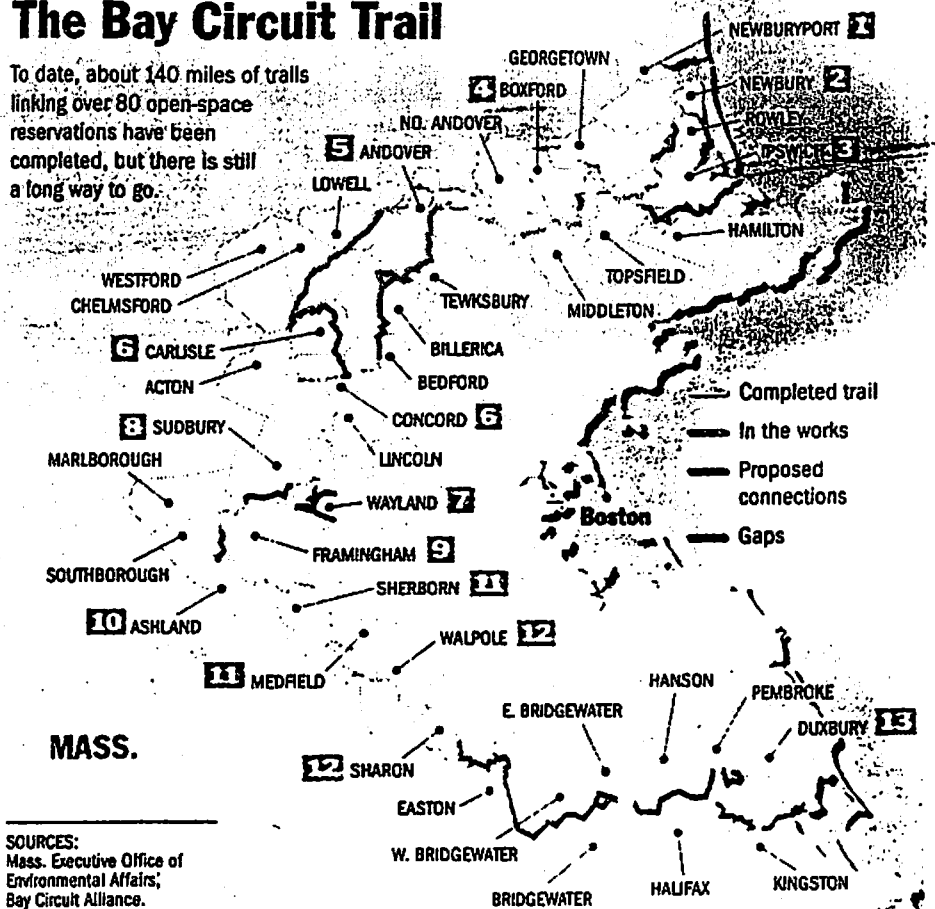


Look for this sign where the Circuit meets a road.

Bay Circuit Trail

The Bay Circuit Trail

To date, about 140 miles of trails linking over 80 open-space reservations have been completed, but there is still a long way to go.



GLOBE STAFF GRAPHIC/DAVID L. SHUTZ

1 Newburyport

Savor salt marsh scenes by land or air, shadow shorebirds near Plum Island.

2 Newbury

Tramp 230 acres of open space at 17th-century Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, bike by Buffy the Buffalo, take in ocean view from Old Town Hill.

3 Ipswich

Wander wilds of Willowdale State Forest, hike by cedar swamp, examine remains of a glacier.

4 Boxford

Amble along country lanes to village historic district, trek through timbered terrain.

5 Andover

Explore preserves, admire art, ride rails to the trail, meander along the Merrimack.

6 Concord and Lincoln

Follow in Thoreau's footsteps along Walden Pond, jog joyfully up Mount Misery, saunter past Sudbury River.

7 Wayland

Hoof it through hayfields that evoke the English countryside, learn lore from local guide, go on a bike-hike biathlon.

8 Sudbury

Scale summit in Nobscot Scout Reservation, watch hawks from Tipling Rock.

9 Framingham

Saunter through bucolic Sudbury Valley Trustees' sites, explore trails of Callahan State Park.

10 Ashland

Stroll through town forest, hob-nob with herons at Mill Pond.

11 Sherborn and Medfield

Follow forest footpaths to Charles River, watch its waters from King Philip's Rock.

12 Walpole and Sharon

Take train to town forest, ramble over river on White Bridge, visit Moose Hill Audubon Sanctuary.

13 Duxbury

Pass ponds and a stream, cross cranberry bogs, frolic at fall festa, relish sea breeze at Bay Farm.

NEWBURY

Tangy salt air blows over the northern end of the Bay Circuit Trail at Joppa Flats in Newburyport. The wide view across salt marshes extends to Plum Island and the mouth of the Merrimack River.

Shorebirds like it here, gathering under the watchful eyes of the avian mavers of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The society plans to construct a building for their Joppa Flats Education Center here soon.

The trail crosses the Plum Island Turnpike to a signboard at the edge of the Plum Island Airport, where you can grab a map of the route through Newbury. This small airport offers the best access point on the Bay Circuit - if you happen to arrive by ultralight aircraft. Keep your eye on the sky. The trail follows the edge of the grass airstrip for about a hundred yards.

Marked by blazes on small wooden posts,

the Bay Circuit Trail follows a grassy path from the airstrip to the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. Farmers have been raising crops since 1635 on this 230-acre property, now owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Today is the last day for guided tours of the 17th-century farmhouse until June 1. But the grounds remain open all year, offering sweeping views across the salt marshes.

From the farmhouse, it is a short jaunt down Little's Lane and High Road (Route 1A) to Tendercrop Farm (978-462-6972). This is the home of Buffy the Buffalo, the only bison along the Bay Circuit. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Tendercrop is also a popular spot for produce, bakery treats, and beverages. You'll find Tendercrop and other farm stands south of it on Route 1A well-stocked with apples, pumpkins, and other fall treats.

The present Bay Circuit route is mostly on roads through the rest of Newbury, while work to establish a natural footpath progresses. The road route, which is detailed on the Newbury Bay Circuit map, makes a beautiful 8-mile bicycle loop with a stop for a walk over Old Town Hill. The short hike to the hilltop in this Trustees of Reservations property yields a striking view of Plum Island and the ocean, and the nearby salt marshes along Newman Road are gorgeous.

EYE For a bird's-eye view of the vast salt marshes, the trail skirts in Newbury, you can take a scenic flight (\$25 per adult for a 15-minute ride; other options available; call Alan French at 978-462-2314). For information on guided birding trips in the Newbury area, including the field every Wednesday morning, call 978-462-9898.



GLOBE FILE PHOTO/ALAN FRENCH

Alan French, chairman of the Bay Circuit Alliance, walks the Ward Reservation section in Andover. French is now on a 2 1/2 week trek around the circuit.

IPSWICH TO ANDOVER

A few miles to the south, in Rowley near the Ipswich town line, you can lace up your boots and start out on a 46-mile stretch of the Bay Circuit Trail. It runs through handsome forests in Ipswich, Boxford, North Andover, and Andover — all the way to the Tewksbury town line.

Ultra-marathoners who raced 50 miles last May (winning time, 6 hours 45 minutes), found this long stretch breathtaking. Any part of it also rewards exploration at a walking pace.

Fallen leaves crunch beneath your feet on the path over Prospect Hill, the 267-foot summit at the beginning of this stretch. The trail climbs an abandoned ski slope through an upland forest carpeted with ferns.

Crossing the town line into Ipswich, the trail weaves through tall woods where the squirrels are busy shelling hickory nuts. At Bull Brook Reservoir, there's a watery break, then a reentry to civilization as the path skirts a new baseball field. From there it is a 10-minute walk along a road to the Doyon School. Then it's a half mile down a dirt road to Willowdale State Forest.

Suburbia recedes quickly as the trail meanders by marshes and through deep woods where the deer and the waterfowl play. Even after all the leaves are down, the bright red fruits on winterberry bushes provide a splash of color. In its 6 miles through Willowdale, the trail crosses Route 1 and passes a white cedar swamp at Hood Pond. The route through Ipswich ends with a mile along the top of a glacial esker.

Beyond Ipswich, the route rambles past streams (you may spot an otter) in the Georgetown-Rowley State Forest, crossing Interstate 95 on a footbridge.

As the trail heads to historic Boxford, it changes character from a wild woods walk to a four-mile stroll along country roads. Buildings from the 17th to the 19th centuries dot the village.

FYI

■ This Sunday at 1 p.m., the

Boxford Trails Association celebrates its 20th anniversary at the Boxford Community Center.

The event includes a one-hour walk and a petting zoo to entertain the kids; call Nancy Merrill at 978-887-2194.

■ The Addison Gallery in Andover is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday; admission free. Call 978-749-4015.

Beyond Boxford, the route becomes a forest path again, crossing land protected by a mix of private and public landowners. After three woodsy miles through the Harold Parker State Forest in North Andover, the Bay Circuit traverses the private Skug River and Hammond reservations and the Trustees of Reservations' impressive

Ward Hill preserve in Andover.

Across Route 125 from the Ward Reservation, the trail enters woods owned by Phillips Academy and proceeds across the campus. You can add art to your itinerary here with a stop at the Addison Gallery, where the current exhibit of graphics by Frank Stella is as dazzling as the fall colors outdoors.

The route continues to the Purdon Reservation on Lupine Road, a 10-minute walk south from the Andover commuter rail stop. If you come by train, you can take a 2-mile hike east through Phillips Academy to the hilly woods of the Ward Reservation or trek 3 miles west through the Indian Ridge and West Parish Meadow reservations (a pleasant detour off West Parish Meadow is a loop around a pond in Baker's Meadow Reservation).

A choice section of the Bay Circuit begins off River Road, 5 miles farther along the trail from West Parish Meadow. This 2½-mile hike dances up and down tall timber through the Deer Jump Reservation, following the south bank of the Merrimack River.

WALDEN TO WAYLAND

From Walden Pond to Wayland, the Bay Circuit retraces the footsteps of Henry David Thoreau. You'll need maps from the Lincoln and Wayland conservation offices for guidance; the trails through Thoreau's home turf are easy to find, but specific Bay Circuit markings are sparse.

The path along Walden Pond's north shore is a spiritual anchor for the Bay Circuit, passing by the site of Thoreau's cabin. From the western end of the pond, the Bay Circuit Trail crosses train tracks and enters Lincoln in Adams Woods.

You can reach the trail farther south in Lincoln with a short hike from a commuter rail stop. Lincoln's trails carry the Bay Circuit over the top of Mount Misery (don't let the name scare you), down to the Sudbury River, and out to Kettle Hole Drive on the Wayland town line, about 5 miles from Walden Pond.

In Wayland, following the Bay Circuit requires some walking on roads, but the route knits together a verdant tapestry of the town's conservation lands. At Trout Brook, the woods are dotted with glacially formed kettle holes. In Sedgemoor, a conservation tract, the landscape of hayfields and hedgerows evokes the English countryside. Cow Common is the site of the original 17th-century town common, which was then part

of Sudbury. The route passes through Wayland Center before ending at the open fields of Heard Farm.

The conservation lands aren't open to cyclists. If you want to do a hike-and-bike

hiathlon, park your bike at Cow Common, drive Route 126 north to Walden Pond (plenty of parking), and then hike the circuit trails back to your bike. To finish, pedal back along Route 126, which has a paved roadside path all the way from Wayland Center to the pond.

FYI

On Saturday, local trail volunteer Bill Gagnebin leads a Bay Circuit hike across Wayland. The four-hour walk begins at noon at Cow Common; call the Wayland Conservation Office at 508-358-3669 for information.

NOBSCOT TO CALLAHAN

A particularly varied section of the Bay Circuit Trail runs over hill and dale from the Nobscot Scout Reservation in Sudbury to Callahan State Park in Framingham.

At Nobscot, a mile-and-a-half hike reaches a lofty viewpoint at Tipling Rock. Local birders find this to be a good spot to watch groups of hawks during their fall migration.

Bay Circuit: the show

A slide show about the Bay Circuit is hosted by Sharon Hall, expert Art Schmitt at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 15, at the Broadmead Audubon Sanctuary in Nauck (508-855-2266). Future slide shows will be in Melrose Oct. 20, Sharon Oct. 26, Andover Nov. 18, and Marlborough Nov. 19; call Oz Taherelli 978-370-2620 for details.

You can also tramp through the reservation's trail network to the 602-foot summit of Nobscot Hill, the highest elevation on the Bay Circuit.

The trail leaves the reservation, crossing quiet Brimstone Lane for a pleasant, well-blazed woods walk to Wayside Inn Road in Framingham.

After passing through the Sudbury Valley Trustees' Henry's Hill and Welch tracts, the route picks up the trails of Callahan State Park. This outdoor jewel is a longtime favorite of local walkers, and the route over Gibbs Mountain, past Beebe Pond, and through pastoral fields will show you why.

The hike from the Nobscot Reservation's parking area to Callahan parking on Broadmeadow Road in Marlborough can be done in five hours at a leisurely pace, in attractive woods with only two short stretches on roads.

ASHLAND TO SHARON

With the dedication of sections through Sharon and Medfield this fall, a route spanning a thigh-burning 55 miles from Sudbury to Sharon now constitutes the longest continuous piece of the Bay Circuit Trail.

Though this is all "dedicated Bay Circuit Trail," meaning it is open to the public for foot travel, it is not yet all pastoral trails. In Ashland, for example, about half of the route uses public roads. Still, the trail strings together the natural gems of the Town Forest and the Mill Pond property, a wading spot for great blue herons half a mile from the center of town.

In Sherborn, the highlight of the Bay Circuit is a forest ramble from the Pine Hill School to the banks of the Charles River at the Rocky Narrows Reservation. From the riverside overlook at King Philip's Rock, you could keep walking the route into Medfield, but you would need detailed directions from a trail volunteer (see Page 13). Otherwise, just drive over to Noon Hill Reservation, which is the trail's centerpiece in Medfield.

If you've never thought of Walpole as a hot spot for sauntering through greenery, the Bay Circuit Trail here will surprise you. The stroll from the high school through a mile and a half of town forest is an easy way to get acquainted with the beauty of this community's extensive and growing conservation lands. You can reach the trail here with a three-quarter mile stroll from the Walpole Center commuter rail stop, passing stately homes on Common Street.

The trail through Walpole's town forest leads to White Bridge, a picturesque wooden span over a tributary of the Neponset River, and a side trip to Duffy's Point, a peaceful spot on the water's edge. You exit the woods here to cross Route 1 at the Sharon town line. Foxboro Stadium is just 1 1/2 miles away, making this the closest the Bay Circuit comes to an NFL franchise.

Across Route 1 in Sharon, the route goes under Interstate 95, then ducks back into the woods for a 2-mile jaunt to the Moose Hill Audubon Sanctuary. There's still much to be done to mark the trail in Sharon outside the sanctuary, but the commitment to forge this link has been made.

DUXBURY

The Bay Circuit Trail reaches its southern terminus with a 9-mile stretch across Duxbury. A sandy lane beneath tall pines passes Upper Chandler Pond. Later, the trail follows Philips Brook through woods to the site of a long-vanished sawmill.

Farther along, the Lorings Cranberry Bogs provide a large opening that breaks up the miles of woods walking. Here, I recently followed 4-year-old Emily McClure as she set a new personal distance record with a 2-mile trek. She took handily to the role of trailblazer, spotting each white marker and racing ahead to tag the trunk of the tree bearing it.

It might be a grownup version of that trailblazing urge that motivates Bay Circuit Trail volunteers in more than 50 communities to persist in the work of establishing and improving the route. Duxbury's trail is well-marked and well-mapped. At Round Pond, it incorporates woods owned by the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society that have been conservation land for more than a century.

Meetinghouse Road, a primitive cart path covered with pine needles, is nearby. This was the way people traveled to the settle-

ment's main gathering place 350 years ago.

The Bay Circuit in Duxbury ends at Bay Farm, where cedar-lined paths and open fields roll to the seashore. Here, the trail returns to the realm of the tides at a granite outcrop on Kingston Bay, after its long odyssey in-

FYI Duxbury's Fall Fiesta this Sunday features a short guided walk for kids and a 3-mile guided hike for adults, both in the Round Pond area. Meet at 1 p.m. at a parking area on Mayflower Street about a half-mile south of East Street; call Don Muirhead at 781-934-2656 for information.

land. The view extends to Clark's Island, where the Pilgrims held their first religious service in the New World in 1620.

Exploring the Bay Circuit as it is taking shape today is an eye-opening introduction to its wealth of history and its future potential. Its progress during the 1990s gives every indication that its open spaces will become even more attractive spots to catch warm rays of sunshine for many seasons to come.

Thomas A. Lepisto is a freelance writer.